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Accessions

151.647

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Thomas Pennant Barton.

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Received, May, 1873.

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See Sig. E 3, verso, paragraph commencing
with the words—"ye, trust them not: for there is an upstart
Crow beautified with our Feathers, that with his Tighers
heart, wrapt in a Players hyde, supposes he: as voluble
to bombast out a blank verse, as the best of you: and being
an absolute Iohannes fac totum, is in his own conceit the
only Shakes-scene in a Country."

...ly ...
... to the ...
... once ...

GREENES
Groatsworth of Wit,
BOUGHT WITH
a Million of Repentance:

Describing the Folly of Youth,
the falshood of Make-shift Flatterers,
the Miserie of the negligent, and mis-
chiefes of deceiuing Curtezans.

Published at his dying request,
AND
Newly corrected, and of many errors purged.

Felicem fuisse, infaustum.



LONDON,

Printed by John Hauiland, for Henry Bell. 1629.

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TO WITTIE

Poets, or Poeticall Wittes.



Witte, that runnes in this sublunarie *Maze*, and takes but *Nature* for its *O-ri-ginall*, makes *Reason* and *Iudgement* a payre of false spectacles, where-through to take an imperfect surney of things *about earth*; and so leaping over the *Light of diuine direction*, falls hudwinckt into the pitfall of its owne Folly: For a *Wit* vn-sanctified, is the *Diuels Anuile*, whereon he forges the engines of *selfe-ruine*. This is the reason, that so many *wit-worne Ideots*, after they haue descended frō the high stand of *Contemplation*, to looke into them selues, are forced (the day after the *Fayre*) to howle out this old *Ballad* made in *Hell*,

Ingenio perij, qui miser ipse meo:

Wit whither wilt thou? woe is me;

Th' hast brought me to this misery.

Vnder the wings of a *Wit* naturall, are hatcht these three *unluckie Birds*: *Impudence*, *Selfe-conceit*, *Emulation*. *Impu-dence* turnes the *Key of Contempt*, and lets in *hard Opinion* to passe in *Iudgement* against the *Generall*, still bearing out her owne *Disease* with a stolne face: her *forme* is reflected

To Wittie Poets,

from the glasse of *Flattery*, wherein she shewes sayre, others foule ; and doting on *Figures* falsely presented, scornefully kicks downe perfect *Knowledge* to the lowest Region of *Disgrace*.

Selfe-conceit; she prodigiously studies to put out the *Light of wit*, by seeming to know beyond the reach of *Reason*, as if she had miraculously discovered some stand from off the earth, aboue the sight of *Humanitie*, from whence over-looking al, makes it her owne *glorie*, hypercritically to reprove others.

Emulation; she was nur't by a shee-Toad ; shee neuer lins swelling, till she burst her selfe, and poysons others : She speakes none faire, but a Barber ; & him for feare too ; lest he should shew her the trick of a Cut-throat : She will be *none*, where she may not be *best* : Shee's euer struggling to clamber vp to the narrow top of absolute *perfection*, and there to sit alone, whilst the desertfull *Hopes* of true *Discretion*, willingly giue vp their *Care*, & sileently content to stay *below*, or come *behind*. These prenominated, are the three bold Bayards, that iustle and shoulder for a sitting place in this Worlds wide *Court of Requests*, when *Vertue* and *Knowledge* know it better manners to stand and wait.

The bestiall gutlings of this fulsom-feeding age, fall vpon a peece of piping-hot *Poetrie*, as on a *Christmas Pie* ; they dabble their dirty fingers in't ; stusse vp their stomacks ; belch out a fowre *Censure*, and then regardlessly thrust it to the lower end o' th table : so that, notwithstanding she come clad in the richest habit of *Skill*, and pranked out in the liueliest colours of *Conceit* ; yet before *Censures* blinking eye, she appeares but an ill-fauoured Dowdie.

Poetrie affoordes better measure of *Charity*, than *Poerie*: For, to lend the world a furnish of *Witte*, shee layes her owne to pawne; And for her *Humilitie*, that's ouerrunning full: for shee will kisse the shadow of a gowtie-toes shadow, and lie crowching at the foot of an *Epistle*, to watch the fall of some *Great-mans* gracefull looke; and at last, for her labour, perhaps, be popt it'h mouth with a *Charles Almes*, that's *Nothing*. *Poetrie* and *Beggerie* are twin-borne brats: they haue one fate from *Birth*: one fall to *Death*; and both *unfortunate*.

Of all other creatures your *Poet* liues most in, and most out of danger; and that in two respects: He liues most in danger, to perish for want of *Competencie*; and contrariwise, he liues most out of danger, for euer being risled; because he neuer carries any thing about him, worth playing the theefe for: To be a *Poet*, and haue meanes to bee so, is not to be at all: for hee must put off himselfe, and compose his *Parts* after the vulgar forme; be new, with mens new affections: he must not run a counter-course, out from the sent of those *Humours*, the present times approue: Aboue all, he must deifie *Pride*; she must haue tapers of supple soothings, set vp before her illustrious outside; no matter, if the Soule within, sit poorely without Light. The true Degree, and iust Height of her swolne Sublimitie, must not bee taken right as it is, but as it seemes to be: after this, *Imagination* steps out, and (as *Isis* Affe was) guls her with this beleefe; That those *Honours* are bestowed on her, when indeed they are otherwise offered vp to the painted *Idoll* she carries.

O Spirit of Distraction! That sacred *Learning*, the hap-pie Birth of Heauen; who ha's *Reward* and *Riches* dwelling within her selfe; should be forc't by the furious Ty-rant

To Wittie Poets, &c.

rant *Want*, so to prostrate her vnblemisht *Bodie*, as to commit folly with *Earth*, and bespoile her State of *Cleer-nesse*, for so grosse a benefit as *Breath*?

Wit may not vnaptly be termed, the worlds *goggle-eyde Lampe*; which illighting all, darkens its owne: and to feed others, deuours it selfe: *Wit* and *Honesty* cannot abide each others Company; for *Necessitie* is the *go-betweene*, to set'em at odds. *Wit* is a skillfull midwife; it can deliuer its *owner* of a bigge-bellied *Purse*, and bring the same man to bed of a foule shirt. There's an English Prouerbe, that *Wit runs a wooll-gathering*: and good reason two: for its commonly *thred-bare*. A *Poet* & his *Wit*, must be like *Adams* & his *Ape*; they must trudge together from place to place, to shew tricks for a liuing: and that too, (like a *Witches*) euer bare and base: Is not that *Wit* superlatiuey sottish? which disburses large sums of *Labour*; and takes vpon trust inestimable treasures of *Time*, for *Doomes-day* repayment, onely to purchase a *passé of praise*: and yet at last, leaues to his Heyre nothing, but the Fee-simple of *Pouertie*? That *Life* therefore is but *Death* aboue ground, which propounds *Griefe* its *Gain*; and affliction its end and period.

But here I meete with an *Exit*: the *Prologue's* ended, and I must off: Now *Reader*, (for I will not call thee *gentle*, till I know whether thou wilt bite or no) behold a drie and *withered shadow*, which once was *Greene*, appeare in his native colour: new dipt, and a fresh glosse set on him: ready to enter vpon the *Stage* of triall, to answer vpon's *Cu*, and speake his owne part.

Yours; if not, the cares taken,

I. H.



GREENES

Groatworth of VVit.



In an Iland bound with the Ocean, there was sometime a City situated made rich by Merchandize, and populous by long space; the name is not mentioned in the Antiquary, or else worne out by times Antiquity, what it was it greatly skils not : but therein thus it happened. An old new made Gentleman herein diuert of no smal credit, exceeding wealthy, and of a large conscience: he had gathered from many to bestow vpon one, for though he had two sonnes he esteemed but one, that being as himselfe, brought vp to be a Goids bondman, was therefore held helre apparent of his ill-gathered goods.

The other was a Scholler, and married to a proper Gentlewoman, and therefore least regarded : for it is an old sayd Saw; To Learning & Law, theres no greater foe, than they that nothing know. Yet was not the Father altogether vnlettered, for he had good experience in a Noverint, and by the vntuerall termes therein contained, had giuen many Gentlemen to seeke vnknown countries : wise he was, for he bare office in his Parish, and late as formally in his sex-furde Colone, as if he had bene a very bpright dealing Burges, hee

was religious too, neuer without a booke at his belt, and a bolt in his mouth, ready to shoote through his sinfull neighbour.

And Latine hee had somewhere learned, which though it were but little, yet was it profitable, for he had this Philosophy written in a King, *Tu tibi cura*, which precept he curiously obserued, being in selfe-love so religious, as he held it no point of Charity to part with any thing, of which hee lining might make vse.

But as all mortall things are momentary, and no certainty can bee found in this vncertaine world, so Gorinius (for that shal be this Usurers name) after many a goaty pang that had pincht his exterior parts, many a curse of the people that mounted into Heauens presence, was at last with his last Summons, by a deadly disease arrested where-against, when he had long contended, and was by Physicians giuen over, hee cald his two Sonnes befoze him; and willing to perfozme the old Proverbe, *Qualis vita, finis ita*, he thus prepared himselfe, and admonished them. My Sonnes, (for so your mother said ye were) and so I assure my selfe one of you is, and of the other I will make no doubt.

You see the time is come, which I thought would neuer haue approached, and wee must now be separated, I feare neuer to meet againe. This fiftene yeres daily haue I liued bered with disease: and might I liue fiftene moze, how euer miserably, I should thinke it happy. But death is relentlesse, and will not be intreated: wittlesse, and knowes not what good my gold might doe him: senselesse, and hath no pleasure in the delightful places, I would offer him. In briebe, I thinke he hath with this scoule my eldest Son borne brought vp in the Vniuersity, and therefore accounts, that in riches is no Vertue. But you, my Sonne, (laying then his hand on the yongers head) haue thou another Spirit: for without wealth, life is a death: What is Gentry if wealth bee wanting, but base seruile beggery? Some comfort yet it is vnto me, to see how many Gallants, sprang of noble parents, haue croutch to Gorinius to haue sight of his gold: O Gold, desired Gold,

gold, admired gold and haue loſt their patrimonies to Gorini-
 nus, becauſe they haue not returned by their day that ado-
 red creature: how many Schollers haue written times in
 Gorinius prayſe, and receiued (after long capping and reue-
 rence) a ſirpenney reward, in ſigne of my ſuperſiciall liberali-
 ty. Wiſely, my young Lucanio, how I haue bene reuerentſt
 thou ſeeſt, when honeſter men, I confeſſe, haue bene ſet farre
 off, for to be rich, is to be any thing; wiſe, honeſt, worſhipfull,
 or what not: I tell thee, my ſonne, when I came firſt to this
 City, my whole wardrope was onely a ſute of white ſheepe
 ſkins, my wealth an old Goat, my woooning, the wide
 world. At this inſtant (O griefe to part with it!) I haue in
 ready coyne threſcoze thouſand pound; in Plate and Jewels,
 xv. thouſand; in bonds and ſpecialties as much; in land nine
 hundred pound by yeare: all which Lucanio, I bequeath to
 thee, onely I reſerue for Roberto, thy well read brother, an
 old Goat (being the ſtocke I firſt began with) wherewith
 I wiſh him to buy a groatſworth of wit: for he in my life hath
 reproued my manner of life, and therefore at my death ſhall
 not be contaminated with corrupt gaine. Here by the way
 Gentlemen, muſt I digreſſe, to ſhew the reaſon of Gorinius
 preſent ſpeech: Roberto being come from the Academy to vi-
 ſit his father, there was a great feaſt provided, where for ta-
 ble-talk, Roberto knowing his father, and moſt of the com-
 pany to be execrable uſurers, inueighed mightily againſt that
 abhorred vice, inſomuch that he urged teares from diuers of
 their eies, and compunction in ſome of their hearts. Din-
 ner being paſt, he comes to his father, requeſting him to take
 no offence at his liberall ſpeech, ſeing what he had uttered
 was truth. Angry ſon (ſaid he) no by my honeſty (and that
 is ſomewhat I may ſay to you;) but bleſe it ſtill, and if thou
 canſt perſwade any of my neighbors from lending upon uſu-
 ry, I ſhould haue the more customers: to which when Roberto
 would haue replied, hee ſhut himſelfe into his ſtudy, and fell
 to telling over his money.

This was Roberto's offence: now returne wee to ſicke Go-

rinus; who after he had thus vnequally distributed his goods and possessions, beganne to aske his sonnes how thy liked his bequeste, either seemed agréed, and Roberto charged him with nothing more than repentance of his sinfull life: to thine owne said hee, fond boy; and come my Lucanio, let me giue thee good counsell befoze my death: as for you Sir, your bookes are your counsellors, and therefore to them I bequeath you. As for Lucanio, my onely comfort, because I hope thou wilt as thy Father be a gatherer, let me blesse thee befoze I die. Multiplie in wealth my Son, by any meanes possibly that thou maist, onely die Alchymie, for therein are more deceipts, than her beggerly Artists haue words, and yet are the wretches, more talkatiue than women. But my meaning is, thou shouldest not stand on conscience in causes of profit, but heape treasure vpon treasure, for the time of need: yet seeme to be deuout, else shalt thou be held vile: frequent holy exercises, graue company, and aboue all, vse the conuersation of young Gentlemen, who are so wedded to prodigality, that once in a quarter necessity knocks at th'ir chamber doores: proffer them kindnesse to relieue their wants, but be sure of good assurance, giue faire words till daies of payment come, and then vse my course, spare none: what though they tell of conscience, (as a number wil talke) look but into the dealings of the world, and thou shalt see it but idle words. Seest thou not many perish in the streets, and fall to theft for need; whom small succour would relieue; then where is conscience, and why art thou bound to vse it more than other men? Seest thou not daily forgeries, perjuries, oppressions, rackings of the poore, raising of rents, inhauing of duties, euen by them that should be all conscience, if they meant as they speake: but Lucanio, if thou read well this Booke (and with that he reacht him Machiavels workes at large,) thou shalt see what it is to bee so fool-holy, as to make scruple of conscience, where profit presents it selfe.

Bestowes, thou hast an instance by thy thred-bare brother here, who willing to doe no wrong hath lost his Childs right:

Groatſworth of Wit.

for who would wiſh any thing to him, that knowes not how to uſe it.

So much Lucanio for conſcience : and yet I know not what's the reaſon, but ſomewhat ſtings me inwardly when I ſpeake of it. I Father, ſaid Roberto, it is the Worme of Conſcience, that bites you at the laſt heare to remember your life, that eternall life may follow your repentance. Out ſoule, (ſaid this miſerable Father) I feele it now, it is as onely a ſtitch: I will forward with my exhortation to Lucanio. As I ſaid my Sonne, make ſpoile of young Gallants, by inſinuating thy ſelfe amongſt them, and be not moued to thinke their Anceſſors were famous, but conſider thine were obſcure, and that thy Father was the firſt Gentleman of the name: Lucanio, thou art yet a Bachelor, and ſo keepe thee, till thou maite wiſh one that is thy equall, I meane in wealth; regard not beauty, it is but a baite to entice thy neighbours eye; and the moſt faire are commonly moſt fond: uſe not too many familiars, for few proue friends, and as eaſie it is to weigh the winde, as to diue into the thoughts of worldly glosers. I tell thee Lucanio, I haue ſeene foureſcore Winters beſides the odde ſeuen, yet ſaw I neuer him, that I eſteemed as my friend but gold, that deſired creature; whom I haue dearly loued and found ſo firme a friend, as nothing to me hauing it, hath ben wanting. No man but may thinke dearly of a true friend, and ſo doe I of it, laying it vnder ſure locks, and lodging my heart therewith.

But now (Ah my Lucanio) now muſt I leave it, and to thee I leave it with this leſſon, loue none but thy ſelfe, if thou wilt liue eſteemed. So turning him to his ſtudy where his chiefe treaſure lay, hee loud cryed out in the wiſe mans words, *O mors quam amara*; O death how bitter is thy memory to him that hath all pleaſures in this life: ſo with two or three lamentable groanes he left his life: and to make ſhort worke, was by Lucanio his ſonne interred, as the cuſtome is with ſome ſolemnity. But leaving him that hath left the world, to him that cenſureth of every worldly man: paſſe we to his Sonnes, and

see how his long layed by store is by Lucanio lookt into. The youth was of condition simple, shamefast and flexible to any counsell, which Roberto perceiuing, and pondering how little was left to him, grew into an inward contempt of his Fathers unequal Legacy, and determinate resolution to worke Lucanio all possible iniury: hereupon thus conuerting the swātnesse of his study, to the sharpe thirst of reuenge, he (as Enue is seldome idle) sought out fit companions to effect his vnbzotherly resolution. Neyther in such a case is ill company farre to seeke; for the Sea hath scarce so many leopards, as populous Cities haue deceiuing Sirens, whose eyes are Adamants, whose words are Witchcrafts, whose dozes lead downe to death. With one of these female Serpents Roberto comfozt, and they conclude what euer they compassed, equally to share to their contents. This match made, Lucanio was by his bzother bzought to the bush, where he had scarce pruned his wings, but he was fast limed, and Roberto had what he expected. But that wee may keepe forme, you shall heare how it sortuned.

Lucanio being on a time very pensine, his bzother bzake with him in these termes. I wonder Lucanio why you are so disconsolate, that want not any thing in the world, that may worke your content. If wealth may delight a man, you are with that sufficiently furnisht: if credit may procure a man any comfozt, your word I know well, is as well accepted as any mans obligation: in this City are faire buildings and pleasant gardens, and cause of solace, of them I am assured you haue your choise. Consider bzother, you are young, then plod not altogether in meditating on our Fathers precepts: which howsoeuer they sauoured of profit, were most vnsauorly to one of your yeares applied. You must not thinke, but certaine Merchants of this City expect your company, sundry Gentlemen desire your familiarity, and by conuerſing with such, you will be accounted a Gentleman: otherwise a peasant, if you liue thus obscurely. Besides, which I had almost forgot, and then had all the rest bene nothing,
you

Groatſworth of Wit.

you are a man by nature furniſhed with all exquisite proportion, woorthy the loue of any courtlie Lady, be ſhe neuer ſo amorous; you haue wealth to maintaine her, of women not little longed for: words to court her you ſhall not want, for my ſelfe will be your Secretary. Wleſſe, why ſtand I to diſtinguiſh ability in particularities, when in one word it may be ſaid (which no man can gainsay) Lucanio lacketh nothing to delight a wiſe, nor any thing but a wiſe to delight him? My young maſter being thus claude, and puſt by with his owne praiſe, made no longer delay, but haniſh on his holyday hoſe, he tricked himſelfe by, and like a fellow that meant good ſooth, he clapped his brother on the ſhoulder, and ſaid. Faith brother Roberto, and yee ſay the word, lets go ſeek a wiſe, while it is hot, both of vs together, Ile pay well, and I dare turne you looſe to ſay as well as any of them all: Well, Ile do my beſt, ſaid Roberto, and ſince yee are ſo forward, lets goe now and trie our good fortune.

With this, ſooth they walke, and Roberto went directly towards the houſe, where Lamilia (for ſo we call the Curtezian) kept her Hoſpitall, which was in the Suburbs of the City, pleaſantly ſeated, and made more delectable by a pleaſant Garden, wherein it was ſituate. No ſooner came they within kenne, but Miſtreſſe Lamilia, like a cunning Angler made ready her chaunge of baytes, that ſhee might effect Lucanios bane: and to begin, ſhe diſcovered from her window her beauteous inticing face, and taking a Lure in her hand, that ſhe might the rather allure, ſhe ſung this Sonnet with a delicious voyce.

Lamilia's Song.

*Fie, fie on blind fancy,
It hinders youths ioy:
Fayre Virgins learne by me,
To count loue a toy.*

*When Lowe learned first the A B C. of delight,
And knew no figures, nor conceited Phrase:
He simply gaue to due desert her right,
He led not Louers in darke winding wayes,
He plainly wild to loue, or flatly answered no;
But now who lists to prone, shall finde it nothing so.*

*Fie, fie then on fancy,
It hinders youths ioy:
Fayre Virgin: learne by me,
To count loue a toy.*

*For since he learnd to vse the Poets pen,
He learn'd likewise with smoothing words to faine,
Witching chaste cares with troubleesse tongues of men,
And wronged faith with falshood and disdaine.
He giues a promise now, anon he sweareth no,
Who listeth for to prone, shall finde his changing so:*

*Fie, fie then on fancie,
It hinders youths ioy,
Faire Virgins learne by me,
To count loue a toy.*

While this painted Sepulchre was shadowing her corrupting guilt, Hiena-like, alluring to destruction, Roberio and Lucanio vnder the window kept even pace with euery stoppe of her Instrument, but especially, my young Ruffler (that before time like a Bird in a Cage, had beene pzentise for threelives, or one and twenty yeeres at least, to extreme Auarice his deceased Father) It was a world to see, how hee sometime simperd it, striving to set a countenance on his turn'd face, that it might same of wainscot pzoofe, to behold her face without blushing: anon, he would stroake his bow-bent leg, as though hee went to shoot loues arrowes from his Thins: then wipte his chinne (for his beard was not yet growne) with a gold wrought hand-kercher, whence of purpose hee let fall a handfull of Angels. This golden showze was no sooner rained, but Lamilia ceast her song, and Roberio (assuring himselfe the foole was caught) came to Lucanio, (that stood now as one that had stard Medusa in the face) and awaked him from his amazement with these words. What in a traunce brother: whence spring these dumps: are yee amazed at this object: or long yee to become loues subiect? Is there not difference betwene this delectable life, and the imprisonment you haue all your life hitherto endured? If the sight and hearing of this harmonious beauty, worke in you effects of wonder, what will the possession of so diuine an essence, wherein beauty and art dwell in their perfectest excellency? Brother, said Lucanio, lets vse few words, and she be no more than a woman, I trust youle helpe me to her: and if you doe, well I say no more, but I am yours till death vs depart, and what is mine, shall bee yours, world without end, Amen.

Roberio smiling at his simplenesse helpt him to gather vp his droopt gold, and without any more circumstance led him to Lamilia's house, for of such places it may be said, as of hell;

Noctes atque dies patet atri ianua Ditis.

So their doores are euer open to entice youth to destruction.

They were no sooner entred, but Lamilia her selfe like a second Helen, court-like begins to salute Roberto, yet did her wandering eye glance often at Lucania : the effect of her entertainment consisted in these termes, that to her simple house Seignior Roberto was welcome, and his brother the better welcome for his sake : albeit his good report confirmed by his present demeanour, were of it selfe enough to giue him deserved entertainment in any place, how honourable soeuer : mutual thanks returned, they led this prodigall Child into a parlor garnished with goodly portraictures of amiable personages, neere which, an excellent consort of musicke began at their entrance to play. Lamilia seeing Lucanio shamefast, tooke him by the hand, and tenderly winking him, bled these words. Welcome me Gentleman, I am very sorry that our rude entertainment is such, as no way may worke your content: for this I haue noted since your first entring, that your countenance hath been heauy, & the face being the glasse of the heart, assures me the same is not quiet: would ye wish any thing here that might content you, say but the word, & assure ye of present deliuerance to effra your full delight. Lucanio, being so far in loue, as he perswaded himselfe without her grant he could not liue, had a good meaning to vtter his minde, but wanting fit words, he stood like a trewant that lackt a Prompter, or a Player, that being out of his part at his first entrance, is faine to haue the booke to speake what he should performe: Which Roberto perceiuing, replied thus in his behalfe. Pardon, The Sunnes brightnesse dazzleth the beholders eyes : the Maiesty of Gods, amazed humane men: Fully Prince of Orators, once fainted, though his cause was good, and he that tamed monsters, stood amazed at beauties ornaments : then blame not this young man though he replied not, for hee is blinded with the beauty of your Sunne-darkening eyes, made mute with the celestiall Organe of your voyce, & feare of that rich ambush of amber-coloured darts, whose points are leueld against his heart. Wel Seignior Roberto said she, how euer you interpret their sharpe leuell, be sure they are not bent

to doe him hurt, & but that modeſty blinds vs wzze ſpaldens from uttering the inward ſorrow of our minds, per- chance the cauſe of griefe is ours, how euer men doe colour, for as I am a Virgin I proteſt, (and therewith- all ſhe tainted her cheekes with a vermillion blaſh) I neuer ſaw Gentleman in my life, in my eye, ſo gracious as is Luca- nio; onely that is my griefe, that cyther I am deſpiſed, for that hee ſcoznes for to ſpeake, or elſe (which is my greater ſorrow) I feare hee cannot ſpeake. Not ſpeake Gentlewoman quoth Lucanio ? that were aieſt indeed : yes, I thanke God I am ſound of winde and limbe, onely my heart is not as it was wont: but and you be as good as your word, that will ſoone be well, and ſo craning ye of moze acquaintance, in to- ken of my plaine meaning, receiue this Diamond, which my old Father loued dearly, and with that deliuered her a Ring, wherein was a pointed Diamond of wonderfull worth. Which ſhe accepting with a low conge, returned him a ſilke Riband for a fauour, tied with a True-louers knot, which he faſtened vnder a faire Jetwell on his Beauer ſelt.

After this *Diomedes & Glaucis perſuatio*, my young ma- ſter wared cranke, and the muſicke continuing, was very forward in dawning, to ſhew his cunning : and ſo deſiring them to play on a hozne pipe, layd on the pavement loſtly with his leaden heeles, cozuetting like a ſteed of Seignior Roc- coes teaching ; and wanted nothing but bels, to be a Hobby- horſe in a morrice. Yet was he ſoothed in his folly, and what euer he did, Lamilia counted excellent : her praiſe made him praud, inſomuch, that if he had not beene intreated, he would rather haue dyed in his daunce, than left off, to ſhew his Di- greſſe delight. At laſt, reaſonably perſwaded, ſeing the Table furniſhed, hee was contented to ceaſe, and ſettle himſelfe to his victuals, on which (having befoze laboured) he fed luſtily, eſpecially of a wood cocke Pie, wherewith Lamilia his Car- uer, plentifully plyed him. Full diſhes hauing furniſht emp- ty ſtomacks, and Lucanio thereby got leaſure to talke, falls to diſcourſe of his wealth, his lands, his bonds, his ability

and how himselfe with all hee had, was at Madame Lamilia's disposing: desiring her afoze his Brother, to tell him simply what shee meant. Lamilia replied; My sweet Lucanio, how I esteeme of thee, mine eyes doe witnesse, that like hand-maids. haue attended thy beauntious face, euer since I first beheld thee: yet seeing loue that lasteth, gathereth by degrees his liking; let this for that suffice: If I find thee firme, Lamilia will be faithfull; if flaking, she must of necessity be infortunate, that hauing neuer seene any whom before she could affect, she shou'd be of him iniuriously forsaken. Nay, said Lucanio, I dare say my brother here will giue his word: for that I accept your owne said Lamilia, for with me your credit is better than your brothers. Roberto brake off their amorous prattle with these speeches: With eyther of you are of other so fond at the first sight, I doubt not but time will make your loue more firme. Yet Madam Lamilia, although my brother and you be thus forward, some crosse chance may come: for *Mulca cadur inter calicem, supremaque labra.* And for a warning to teach you both wit, Ile tell you an old wines tale.

Before you goe on with your Tale (quoth Mistresse Lamilia) let me giue you a caueat by the way, which shall be figured in a Fable.

Lamilia's

*Lamília's Fable.*

THe Foxe on a time came to visit the Gray, partly for kindred, chiefly for craft : and finding the hole empty of al other company, sauing onely one Badger, inquiring the cause of his solitarinesse, he described the sodaine death of his Dam & Sire, with the tell of his consozts. The Fox made a Friday face, counterfeiting sorow: but concluding that deaths stroke was incurable, perswaded him to seeke some fit mate wherewith to match. The Badger scone agreed, so forth they went, and in their way met with a wanton ewe stragling from the fold : the Fox bade the Badger play the tall stripling, and strut on his Tiptoes : for (quoth he) this ewe is Lady of all these lands, and her brother chiefe Beltweather of sundry flocks. To be short, by the Foxes perswasion, there would bee a peretuell league betweene her harnelless kindred, and all other denouring beafts, for that the Badger was to them all allied : seduced shee yeilded : and the Foxe conducted them to the Badgers habitation : Where drawing her aside vnder colour of ephoztation, puld out her throat to satisfie his greedy thirst. Here I should note, a young whelp that biewed their walke, informed the Shepheard of what happened. They followed and trayned the Fox and Badger to the hole, the Fox afore had craftily conuayed himselfe away, the Shepheard found the Badger ranting for the ewes

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murder, his lamentation being held for counterfeit, was
by the shepherds dogge worried. The Fox escaped : the ewe
was spoiled ; and ever since betwene the Faders and the
dogges, hath continued a mortall enmity : And now be ad-
vised Roberto (quoth she) goe forward with your Tale,
take not by this insinuation to turne our mirth
to sorrow. Goe too Lamilia (quoth hee)
you feare what I meane not, but
howeuer yee take it, Ile
forward with my
Tale.

Roberto's



Robertoes Tale.

In the North parts there dwelt an old Squire, that had a yong daughter to his heire, who had (as I know Madam Lamilia you haue had) many youthfull Gentlemen that long time sued to obtaine her loue. But she knowing her owne perfection (as women are by nature proud) would not to any of them bouchsafe fauour : insonmuch that they perceiuing her relentlesse, shewed themselues not altogether witlesse, but left her to her fortune, when they found her frowardnesse. At last it fortuned among other Strangers, a Farmers sonne visited her fathers house : on whom at the first sight she was enamoured, he likewise on her. Tokens of loue past betweene them, either acquainted others Parents of their choise, and they kindly gaue their consent. Short tale to make, married they were, and great solemnity was at the wedding feast. A young Gentleman that had been long a Suter to her, being that the Sonne of a Farmer should be so preferred cast in his mind by what meanes (to marre their meriment) he might steale away the Bride. Hereupon he conferres with an old Widdam, called mother Gunbey, dwelling thereby, whose coue sell hauing taken, he fell to his practice and dlist, and proceeded thus. In the afternoone, when dancers were very busie, he takes the Bride by the hand, & after a turne or two, tels her in her eare, he had a secret to impart vnto her, appointing her in any wise, in the euening to finde a time to confer with him: she promised

the world, and so they parted. Then goes he to the Bridegrome, and with protestations of entire affects protests that the great sorrow he takes at that which he must bitter, whereon depended his especial credit, if it were known the matter by him should be discovered. After the Bridegromes promise of secrecie, the Gentleman tels him, that a friend of his receiued that morning from the Bride a letter, wherein she willed him with some sixteene horse to wait her comming at a Parkeside, for that she detested him in her heart as a base Country Wilde, with whom her Father compelled her to marry. The Bridegrome almost out of his wits, beganne to bite his lip. Nay, saith the Gentleman, if you will by me be aduised, you shall saue her credit, win her by kindnesse, and yet prevent her wanton complot. As how, said the Bridegrome: Marry thus sayd the Gentleman: In the euening (for till the Guests be gone she intends not to gadde,) get you on horse-backe, and seeme to be of the company that attends her comming. I am appointed to bring her from the house to the Parke, and from thence fetch a winding compasse of a mile a bout. but to turne vnto old mother Gunbeyes house, where her loue my friend abides: when she alights, I will conduct her to a chamber far from his lodging, but when the lights are out, & she expects her adulterous copesmate, your selfe (as reason is) shall proue her bedfellow, where priuately you may reprove her, and in the morning early returne home without trouble. As for the Gentleman my friend, I will excuse her absence to him, by saying she mockt thee with her maid in stead of her selfe, whom when I knew at her lighting, I disdaind to bring her vnto his presence. The bride-grome gaue his hand it should be so.

Now by the way we must vnderstand, this mother Gunbey had a Daughter, who all that day sate heavily at home with a Willow Garland, for that the Bridegrome (if he had dealt faithfully) should haue wedded her before any other. But men (Lamia) are vnconstant, money now adayes makes the match, or else the match is mar'o.

But

But to the maſter : the Bridegroom and the Gentleman thus agreed, he tooke his tune, conferred with the Bride, perſwaded her, that her husband (notwithſtanding his faire ſhew at the marriage) had ſwozne to his old ſweet heart, their neighbour Gunbeyes Daughter, to be that night her Bedſellow : and if ſhe would bring her Father, his Father, and other friends to the houſe at midnight, they ſhould find it ſo.

At this the young Gentlewoman inwardly bent, to be by a peaſant ſo abuſed, promiſed if ſhe ſaw likelihood of ſlipping away, that then ſhe would doe as he directed.

All this thus ſorting, the eld womans daughter was trickily attired, ready to furniſh this pageant, for her old mother provided all things neceſſary.

Well, Supper paſt, dauncing ended, all the gueſts would home, and the Bridegroom pretending to bring ſome friend to his home, got his horſe, and to the Parke ſide he rode, and layed with the horſemen that attended the Gentleman.

Anon came Marian like Miſtris Bride, and mounted behind the Gentleman, alway they paſt, ſetcht their compaſſe, and at laſt alight at the old wines houſe, where ſuddenly ſhe is conuayed to her chamber, and the bridegroom ſent to keep her company, where he had ſcarce deniſed how to begin his exhortation, but the father of his bride knockt at ſ chamber door: at w being ſomewhat amazed, yet thinking to turne it to a leſt ſith his wife (as he thought) was in bed with him, he opened ſ door, ſaying; Father you are heartily welcom, I wonder how you found vs out here; this deuice to remove our ſelues, was w my wines conſent, that we might reſt quietly without the maids and bachelors diſturbing vs. But where is your wife, ſaid the gentleman: why here in bed ſaid he. I thought, quoth ſ other, my daughter had ben your wife, for ſure I am to day ſhe was giuen you in marriage. You are merrily diſpoſed, ſaid ſ Bridegroom, what think you I haue another wife? I think bet as you ſpeak, quoth the Gentleman, for my Daughter is below, and you ſay your wife is in the bed. Below (ſayd he) you are a merry man, & with that caſting on a night-gown,

hē went dolone, where when he saw his Wife, the Gentleman his Father, and a number of his friends assembled, hē was so confounded, that how to behaue himselfe hē knew not, onely he cried out that he was deceived. At this the old Woman arrined, and making her selfe ignozant of all the whole matter, inquires the cause of that sudden tumult: When she was told the new Bride-grome was found in bed with her daughter, she exclaimed against so great an injury. Marian was called in quozum: she iustified it was by his allurement; he being condemned by all their consents, was iudged vnwozthy to haue the Gentlewoman vnto his wife, and compelled (for escapings of punishment) to marry Marian: and the young Gentleman (for his care in discovering the Farmers sonnes lewdnesse) was recompensd with the Gentlewomans euer during loue.

Quoth Lamilia, and what of this: Pay nothing sayd Roberro; but that I haue told you the effects of suddaine loue: yet the best is, my bzō: r is a maidenly Watcheler, and for your selfe, you haue not bene troubled with many suters. The fewer the better, said Lucanio. But bzōther, I con you little thanks for this tale, hereafter I pray you ble other Table talke. Lets then end talke, quoth Lamilia, and you (Seignioz Lucanio) and I will goe to the Chesse. To Chesse, said he, what meane you by that: It is a game, said she, that the first danger is but a checke; the woꝛst, the giuing of a mate. Well, said Roberro, that game yee haue bene at already then, for you checkt him first with your beauty, and gaue your selfe for mate to him by your bounty. That is well taken bzōther, said Lucanio, so haue we past our game at Chesse. Will yee play at Tables then, said she: I cannot quoth he; for I can goe no further with my game, if I be once taken. Will yē play then at Cards: I said he, if it be one and thirty. That sooles game, said she: Wāle all to Hazard, said Roberro, and bzōther you shall make one for an houre or two: contented quoth he. So to dice they went, and fortune so fauoured Lucanio, that while they continued square play, he was no loser. Anon cō-
finage

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ſnage came about, and his Angels being double winged, ſlew cleane from befoze him. Lamilia being the winner, prepared a banquet, which finiſhed, Roberto admiſed his brother to depart home, and to furniſh himſelfe with more crownes, leſt he were outcrackt with new commers.

Lucanio loth to be outcountenanſt, ſollowed his aduice, deſiring to attend his returne, which he befoze had determined vnrereſted: for as ſoone as his brothers backe was turned, Roberto begins to reckon with Lamilia, to be a ſharer as well in the monie deceitfully won, as in the Diamond ſo wilfully given. But the ſecundum mores meretricis, teſted thus with the Scholler. Why Roberto, are you ſo wel read, and yet ſhew your ſelfe ſo ſhallow witted, to deme Women ſo weake of conceit, that they ſee not into mens demerits. Suppose (to make you my ſtale to catch the Woodcocke your brother) that my tongue overrunning mine intent, I ſpeake of liberall reward: but what I promiſed, there is the point: at leaſt what I part with, I will be well aduised. It may bee you will thus reaſon: Had not Roberto trained Lucanio vnto Lamilias lare, Lucanio had not now ben Lamilias prey; therefore, ſith by Roberto ſhe poſſelleth her prize, Roberto merits an equall part. Monſtrous abſurd if ſo you reaſon, as well you may reaſon thus: Lamilias dogge hath kild her a Dære, therefore his Miſtreſſe muſt make him a paſſy. No more pen-niſſe Poet, thou art beguild in me, and yet I wonder how thou couldeſt, thou haſt bene ſo often beguild. But it ſareth with licentious men, as with the chaced Boze in the ſtreame, who being greatly reſreſhed with ſwimming, neuer ſeleth any ſmart untill he periſh, recureleſly wounded with his owne weapons. Reaſonleſſe Roberto, that hauing but a Brokers place, asked a Lenders reward. Faithles Roberto, that haſt attempted to betray thy Brother, irreligiouſly forſaking thy wife, deſervedly bene in thy Fathers eye an abſent: thinkeſt thou Lamilia ſo loſe, to conſort with one ſo lewd. No hypocrite, the ſweet Gentleman thy brother, I will till death lone, and thee while I live, loath. This ſhare La-

Greenes

milia glues thee, other gettest thou none.

As Roberto would haue replied, Lucanio approached : to whom Lamilia discourst the whole deceit of his brother, and neuer rested intimating malicious arguments, till Lucanio utterly refused Roberto for his brother, and for euer forbad him his house. And when he would haue perbed reasons, and formed excuse, Lucanios impatience (byged by her impatient malice) forbad all reasoning with them that were reasonlesse, and so giuing him Iacke Drums entertainment, shut him out of dozes : whom we wil follow, and leaue Lucanio to the mercy of Lamilia: Roberto in an extreme extasie, rent his hayre, curst his destiny, blamed his treachery, but most of all exclaimes against Lamilia: and in her against all enticing Curtizans, in these termes.

What meant the Poets to inuective-verse,
To sing Medeas shame, and Scyllas pride,
Calipsoes charmes, by which so many dide ?
Onely for this, their vices they rehearse,
That curious wits, which in the world conuerse,
May shun the dangers and enticing shoes
Of such false Sirens, those home breeding foes,
That from their eyes their venome doe disperse.
So soone kils not the Basiliske with sight,
The Vipers tooth is not so venomous,
The Adders tongue not halfe so dangerous ;
As they that beare the shadow of delight,
Who chaine blind youths in tramels of their hayre,
Till wast brings woe, and sorrow hastes despair.

With this he laid his head on his hand, and lean'd his elbow
on the ground, sighing out sadly,

Hec patior telis vulnera facta meis.

On the other side of the hedge sate one that heard his sorrow,
who

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who getting ouer, came towards him and brake off his paffion. When he approached, he ſaluted Roberto in this ſort.

Gentleman, quoth he, (ſo ſo you ſo in) I haue by chance heard you diſcourſe ſome part of your g. iefe. which appeareth to be moze than you will diſcover, or I can conceit. But if you vouchſafe ſuch ſimple comfort, as my ability will yeild aſſure your ſelfe, that I will endeuour to doe the beſt, that either may procure your profit, or bring you pleaſure: the rather, ſo that I ſuppoſe you are a Scholler, and pittie it is, men of learning ſhould liue in lacke.

Roberto wondering to heare ſuch good words, ſo that this iron age affords ſew that eſteeme of vertue, returned him thankfull gratulations, and (blyed by neceſſity) offered his preſent griefe, beſeeking his aduice how he might be imployed. Why, eaſily quoth he, and greatly to your benefit: ſo men of my profeſſion, get by Schollers their whole liuing. What is your profeſſion, ſaid Roberto? Truly ſir, ſayd he, I am a player. A Player, quoth Roberto, I take you rather ſo a Gentleman of great liuing, ſo if by outward habit men ſhould be cenſured, I tell you, you would be taken ſo a ſubſtantiall man. So am I where I dwell, (quoth the Player) reputed able at my proper coſt, to build a Wind mill. What though the wo:ld once went hard with me, when I was ſaine to carry my playing ſardle a foot-backe: Tempora mutantur, I know you know the meaning of it, better than I; but I thus conſider it, it is otherwiſe now: ſo my very ſhare in playing apparell, will not be ſold ſo two hundred pounnds: truly, ſaid Roberto) it is ſtrange, that you ſhould ſo proſper in that vaine practice. ſo that it ſeems to me, your voice is nothing gracions. Say then, ſaid the Player, I miſlike your iudgement: Why, I am as famous ſo Delphrygus, and the king of Fairies, aſeuer was any of my time. The twelve Labours of Hercules haue I terribly thundered on the ſtage, and played three Scenes of the Deuill in the highway to heauen. Haue ye ſo (ſaid Roberto) then I pray you pardon me. Say more (quoth the player) I can ſerue to make a pretty ſpeech, ſo I was a country

Author, passing at a morall, for it was I that pend the Morall of mans wit, the Dialogue of Diues, and for seuen yeres space was absolute interpreter of the Puppets. But now my Almanacke is out of date.

The people make no estimation
Of Morals, teaching Education.

Was not this pretty for a plaine rime extempore? if ye will yee shall haue more. Nay, it is enough, said Roberto, but how meane you to vse me? Why sir, in making Playes, said the other, for which you shall bee well paid, if you will take the pains.

Roberto perceiuing no remedie, thought it best to respect his present necessity, to trie his wit, went with him willingly: who lodged him at the towne end in a house of retaile, where what happened our Poet, you shall hereafter heare. There by conuersing with bad company, hee grew A malo in peius, falling from one vice to another, and so hauing found a vaine to finger Crownes, he grew cranker than Lucanio, who by this time began to dzoope, being thus dealt withall by Lamilia. Shee hauing bewitched him with her enticing wiles, caused him to consume in lesse than two yeares, that infinite treasure gathered by his Father, with so many a poore mans curse. His lands sold, his Jewels pawned, his money wasted, hee was cashiered by Lamilia that had cosened him of all. Then walked he like one of D. Humphryes Squires, in a thred-bare cloake, his hose dratone out with his heeles, his hose vnseamed lest his feet should sweat with heat: now (as witlesse as he was) he remembred his fathers words, his kindnes to his brother, his carelesnesse of himselfe. In this sorrow hee sat downe on pennellicke bench, where when Opus and Vnus told him by the chimes in his stomacke, it was time to fall vnto meat, he was saine with the Camclion to fad vpon the ayre, and make patience his repast.

While he was at his feast, Lamilia came flaunting by, garnish

Groatſworth of Wit.

niſhed with theſe jewels, whereof ſhe bequiled him, which ſight ſerued to cloſe his ſtomacke after his cold cheare. Roberto hearing of his brothers beggerie, albeit he had little remorſe of his miſerable ſtate, yet did he ſecke him out, to uſe him as a property, whereby Lucanio was ſomewhat prouided for. But being of ſimple nature, he ſerued but for a blocke to whet Robertoes wit on: which the poore ſoule perceiving, he forſooke all other hopes of life, and ſell to be a notozious Pander, in which deteſted courſe he continued till death. But Roberto now famous for an Arch-play-making Poet, his purſe like the ſea, ſometime ſweld, anon like the ſame ſea ſell to a low ebbe, yet ſeldome he wanted, his labours were ſo well eſteemed. Marry this rule he kept, what euer he fingered aforehand, was the certaine meanes to vnbinde a bargaine; and being asked why he ſo ſleightly dealt with them that did him good? It becomes me, ſaith he, to be contrary to the world, for commonly when vulgar men receiue earneſt, they doe perſwame; when I am paid any thing beſore hand, I breake my promiſe. He had ſhift of lodgings, where in euery place his hoſteſſe writ by the wofull remembzance of him; his Landzeſſe and his boy, for they were euer in his houſhold, beſides retayners in ſundry other places. His company were lightly the lewdeſt perſons in the land, apt for pilferie, periury, forgerie, or any villany. Of theſe he knew the caſt to cogge at cards, coſſin at Dice, by theſe he learned the legerdemaines of nips, ſonſts, comcatchers, croſbiters, liſts, high Lawyers, and all the rabble of that vncleane generation of bipers: and pithily could he paint out their whole courſes of craft: So cunning he was in all craftſ, as nothing reſted in him almoſt but craftineſſe. How often the Gentlewoman his wife laboured vainely to recall him, is lamentable to note: but as one giuen euer to all lewdneſſe, he communicated her ſorowfull lines among his loſe trulls, that ieſted at her bootleſſe lamentſ. If he could any way get credit on ſcozes, he would then brag his creditozs carried ſtones, comparing euery round circle to a groning O. procured by a painfull burthen. The ſhamefull end of ſundry his
con

consozts, deseruedly punished for their amisse, wzought no compunction in his heart: of which one, bzother to a bzotherell he kept, was trust vnder a tre, as round as a ball.

To some of his swearing companions thus it happened: A crue of them sitting in a Tauerne carowling, it sozuned an honest gentleman and his friend to enter their roome, some of them being acquainted wth him, in their domineering drunken baine, would haue noe nay, but downe he must sit with them, being placed, no remedy there was, but he must needs keepe euen compasse with their vnseemely carowling: which he refusing, they fell from high wordz to sound strokes, so that with much adoe the gentleman saued his owne, and shifted from their company. Being gone, one of these tiplers forsooth, lackt a gold ring: the other sware they saw the Gentleman take it from his hand. Vpon this the Gentleman was indited befoze a Judge, these honest men are deposed: whose wisdom weighing the time of the bzable, gaue light to the Jury, what power wine-washing payson had, they accozding vnto conscience found the Gentleman not guilty: and God released by that verdict the innocent.

With his accusers thus it fared: the one of them for murder was worthily executed: the other, neuer since prospered: the thiro, sitting not long after vpon a lusty horse, the beast dyed suddenly vnder him. God amend the man.

Roberto every day acquainted with these examples, was notwithstanding nothing bettered, but rather hardened in wickednes. At last was that place iustified; God warneth men by dreames and visions in the night, and by knowne examples in the day: but if he returne not, he comes vpon him with iudgement that shall be felt. For now, when the number of deceits caused Roberto to bee hatefull almost to all men, his immeasurable dzinking had made him the perfect image of the droppe, and the loathsome scourge of Lust, tyrannized in his bones: Lining in extreme pouerty, and hauing nothing to pay but chalke, which now his Host accepted not for currant, this miserable man lay comfzrtlesly languishing, hauing
but

Groatſworth of Wit.

but one great left (the iust proportion of his Fathers Legacye)
which looking on, he cried, O now it is too late, too late to buy
wit with thee: and therefore will I see, if I can sell to carelesse
youth what I negligently forgot to buy.

Here (Gentlemen) breake I off Robertoes speech, whose
life in most part agreeing with mine, found one selfe punish-
ment, as I haue done. Hereafter suppose me the said Rober-
to, and I will goe on with that he promised: Greene will send
you now his groatſworth of wit, that neuer shewed a wifes
worth in his life: and though no man now be by, to doe me
good, yet ere I die, I will by my repentance endeavour to doe
all men good.

Deceiuing world that with alluring toyes,
Hast made my life the subiect of thy scorne:
And scornest now to lend thy fading ioyes,
T'oulength my life, whom friends haue left forlorne,
How well are they that die ere they be borne.

And neuer see thy sleights, which few men shun,
Till vnawares they helpelesse are vndone.

Oft haue I sung of loue and of his fire,
But now I finde that Poet was aduise;
Which made full feasts increasers of desire,
And proues weak loue was with the poore despise
For when the life with food is not suffic'd,

What thoughts of loue, what motion of delight,
What pleasance can proceed from such a wight?

Witnesse my want the murderer of my wit,
My raiſht sense of wonted fury reſt,
Wants such conceit, as should in Poems sit,
Set downe the sorrow wherein I am left,
But therefore haue high heauens their gifts bereſt;
Because so long they lent them me to vse,
And I so long their bounty did abuse.

O that a yeare were granted me to liue,
 And for that yeare my former wits restorde,
 What rules of life, what counsell would I giue ?
 How should my sinne with sorrow then deplore ?
 But I must die of euery man abhorde;
 Time loosely spent will not againe be wonne,
 My time is loosely spent and I vndone.

O horrenda fames! how terrible are thy assaults? but *Ver-
 mis conscientia* moze wounding are thy stings. Ah Gentlemen,
 that liue to read my broken and confused lines, loke not I
 should (as I was wont) delight you wth baine fantasies, but ga-
 ther my follies all together, and as you would deale with so
 many parricides, cast them into the fire: call them Telegones,
 for now they kil their Father, & euery lewd line in them wit-
 ten is a deepe piercing wound to my heart, euery idle houre
 spent by any in reading them, byings a million of sorrowes to
 my soule. & that the teares of a miserable man (for neuer yet
 was any man moze miserable) might wash their memozy
 out with my death, and that those woorks with me toge-
 ther might be interd. But sth they cannot, let my last worke
 witnesse against them with me, how I detest them: Blacke
 is the remembrance of my blacke woorks, blacker than night,
 blacker than death, blacker than hell.

Learn wit by my repentance, (Gentlemen) and let these
 few rules following be regarded in your liues.

- 1 First, in all your actions set God before your eies, for
 the feare of the Lord is the beginning of wisdome: Let his
 word be a lanterne vnto your feet, and a light vnto your
 paths, then shall you stand as firme rockes, and not be moued.
- 2 Beware of looking backe, for God will not be mocked,
 of him that hath receiued much, much shall be demanded.
- 3 If thou be single and canst abstaine, turne thy eyes from
 vanitie, for there is a kinde of women, bearing the faces of
 Angels, but the hearts of Devils, able to intrap the elect if it
 were possible.

Groatſworth of Wit.

4 If thou be married, ſoꝛſake not the wiſe of thy youth to follow ſtrange fleſh, ſoꝛ whoꝛemongers & adulterers the Lord will iudge: The dooꝛe of a Harlot leadeth downe to death, and in her lips there dwels deſtruction: her face is decked with odors, but ſhe bzingeth a man to a moꝛſell of bread and nakedneſſe: of which my ſelfe am inſtance.

5 If thou be left rich, remember thoſe that want, and ſo deale, that by thy wilfulneſſe thy ſelfe want not: Let not Tawerners and Victualers be thy Executors, ſoꝛ they will bzing thee to a diſhonourable graue.

6 Oppreſſe no man, ſoꝛ the cry of the wronged aſcendeth to the eares of the Lord: neither delight to encrease by Uſury, leſt thou looſe thy habitation in the everlaſting Tabernacle.

7 Beware of building thy houſe to thy neighbors hurt, ſoꝛ the ſtones will cry to the timber; & the were laid together in bloud: and thoſe that ſo erect houſes, calling them by their names, ſhall lye in the graue like ſheepe, and death ſhall gnaw vpon their ſoules.

8 If thou be poore, be alſo patient, and ſtrive not to grow rich by indirect meanes, ſoꝛ goods ſo gotten ſhall vaniſh away like ſmoake.

9 If thou be a father, maſter, oꝛ teacher, loyne good examples, with good counſell, elſe little anayle Precepts, where life is different.

10 If thou be a ſonne oꝛ ſervant, deſpiſe not repprooſe, ſoꝛ though coꝛrection be bitter at the firſt, it bzingeth pleaſure in the end.

Had I regarded the firſt of theſe rules, oꝛ ben obedient at ſt laſt, I had not now at my laſt end, ben left thus deſolate: But now, though to my ſelfe I giue Conſilium poſt facta, yet to others they may ſerne ſoꝛ timely precepts. And therefore (while life giues leaue) I wil ſend warning to my old conſorts, which haue liued as looſely as my ſelfe, albeit weakneſſe will ſcarce ſuffer me to write, yet to my fellow Schollers about this Citie, will I direct theſe few inſuing lines.



To those Gentlemen his Quondam
acquaintance, that spend their wits in making
Playes, R. G. wisheth a better exercise, and wise-
dome to prevent his extremities.



If wofull experience may moue you (Gen-
tlemen) to beware, or vnheard of wretched-
nesse, intreat you to take heed ; I doubt not
but you will looke backe with sorrow on
your time past : and endenour with repen-
tance to spend that which is to come.
Wonder not, (for with thee will I first be-
giue) thou famous gracer of Tragedians, that Greene, who
hath said with thee like y fool in his heart, There is no God;
should now giue glory vnto his greatnesse: for pene'rating is
his power, his hand lyes heauy vpon me, he hath spoken vn-
to me with a voyce of thunder. and I haue left; he is a God
that can punish enemies. Why should thy excellent wit, his
gift be so blinded, that thou shouldst giue no glory to the Gi-
uer : Is it pestilent Machiauilian pollicie that thou hast
studied : O punish folly ! What are his rules but mate con-
fused mockeries, able to extirpate in small time the generati-
on of mankind. For if, *Sic volo, sic iubeo*, hold in those that are
able to command: and if it be lawfull *Fas et Nefas*, to doe any
thing that is beneficall ; onely Tyrants should possesse the
Earth: & they striving to exceed in tyranny, should ech to other

Groatsworth of Wit.

be a slaughter man: till the mightiest out living all, one stroke were left for death, that in one age mans life should end. The Brother of this Diabolicall Atheisme is dead, and in his life had neuer the felicity he aimed at: but as he beganne in craft, lived in feare, and ended in despaire. *Quam inscrutabilia sunt Dei iudicia!* This murderer of many Brethren, had his conscience seared like Caine: this betrayer of him that gaue his life for him, inherited the portion of Iudas: this Apostata perished as ill as Iulian: and wilt thou my Friend be his Disciple? Looke vnto me, by him perswaded to that Liberty, and thou shalt finde it an Infernall bondage. I know the least of my demerits merit this miserable death, but wilfull striking against knowne truth, exceedeth all the terrors of my soule. Deferre not (with me) till this last poynt of extremity: for little knowest thou, how in the end thou shalt be visited.

With thee I torne young Iuuenall, that biting Satyrist, that lastly with mee together writ a Comedie. Sweet Boy might I aduise thee, be aduised, and get not many enemies by bitter words: inuicigh against baine men, for thou canst doe it, no man better, no man so well: thou hast a liberty to reprove ail, and name none: for one being spoken to, all are offended, none being blamed, no man is iniured. Stop shallow water till running it will rage, tread on a worme, and it will turne: thou blame not Schollers who are vexed with sharpe and bitter Lines, if they reprove thy too much liberty of reproofe.

And thou no lesse deservuing than the other three, in some things rarer, in nothing inferiour, Driven (as my selfe) to extreme shifts, a little haue I to say to thee: were it not an idolatrous oath, I would sweare by sweet S. George, thou art unworthy better hap, sith thou dependest on so mean a day. Base minded men all three of you, if by my misery yee be not warned: for vnto none of you (like me) sought these burs to cleaue: those Puppets (I mean) that speak from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they al haue bin beholding: is it not like that you to

Greene

whom they all haue beene beholding, Shall (were yee in that case that I am now) be both of them at once forsaken? Yes, trust them not : for there is an vpstart Crow beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers heart, wrapt in a Players hyde, supposes he is as wel able so bombast out a blank verse, as the best of you: and being an absolute *Iohannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a Country. Oh that I might intreat your rare wits to bee imployed in more profitable courses: and let these Apes imitate your past Excellence, and neuer more acquaint them with your admired Inuention's. I know the best husband of you all, will neuer proue an Elurer, and the kindest of them all, will neuer proue a kind Nurse: yet whilst you may sake you better Masters : for it is pittie, men of such rare wits should bee subiect to the pleasures of such rude grômes.

In this I might insert two more, that both haue writ against these buckram Gentlemen. but let their owne worke serue to witnesse against their owne wickednesse, if they perseuer to maintaine any more such peasan'ts. For other new commers, I leaue them to the mercy of these painted mon'sters, who (I doubt not) will dzine the best minded to despise them: for the rest, it skills not though they make a iest at them.

But now returne I againe to you thzee, knowing my misery is to you no newes : and let me heartily intreat you to be warned by my harmes. Delight not (as I haue done) in irreligious caths, for from the blasphemers house, a curse shall not depart: Despise dzunkennes, which wasteth the wit, and maketh men all equall vnto beasts: Flie Lust, as the death-man of the soule, and defile not the Temple of the holy Ghost. Abhor those Epicures, whose loose life hath made Religion loathsome to your eares, and when they sooth you with termes of mastership, remember Robert Greene, whom they haue often so flattered, perishes now for want of comfort. Remember Gentlemen, your lines are like so many light tapers, that are with care deliuered to all of you to maintaine: these with wind-pufft wrath may be extinguished, with

dzunk

Groatſworth of Wit.

drunkenneſſe put out, with negligence let fall : for mans time of it ſelfe is not ſo ſhort, but it is more ſhortned by ſinne. The fire of my light is now at the laſt ſnuffe, and the want of wherewith to ſuſtaine it, there is no ſubſtance for life to ſee on. Truſt not then (I beſeech yee) leſt to ſuch weake ſtaves: for they are as changeable in minde, as in many attires. Well my hand is tyed, and I am forced to leane where I would begin: for a whole booke cannot containe the wrongs, which I am forced to knit vp in ſome few lines of words.

*Deſirous that you ſhould liue, though
himſelfe be dying,*

ROBERT GREENE.

Now to all men I bid farewell
in this ſort, with this conceited
Fable of the olde Comed-
ian Æſop.



Ant and a Graſhopper walking together on a greene, the one careleſſly ſkipping, the other carefully prying what Winters prouiſion was ſcattered in the way : the Graſhopper ſcozning (as wantons will) this needleſſe thrift (as he termed it) reproached him thus,

Greenes

The greedy miser thirsteth still for gaine,
His thrift is theft, his weale works others woe;
That foole is fond which will in caues remaine,
When mongst faire sweetes he may at pleasure goe.

To this the Ant perceiving the Grasshoppers meaning,
quickly replied :

The thrifty husband spares what vnthrifts spends,
His thrift no theft, for dangers to prouide,
Trust to thy selfe, small hope in want yeeld friends,
A caue is better than the desarts wilde.

In short time these two parted, the one to his pleasure, the
other to his labor. Anon Haruest grew on and rest from the
Grasshopper his wonted moisture. Then weakly skips he to
the meadowes bynks, where till fell winter he aboard. But
sozmes continually powzing, he went for succour to the Ant
his old acquaintance, to whom he had scarce discovered his
estate, but the little worme made this reply.

Packe hence (quoth she) thou idle lazie worme,
My house doth harbour no vnchristy mates :
Thou scornd'st to toyle, and now thou feelst the storme
And staru'st for food, while I am fed with cates;
Vse noe intreats, I will relentlesse rest,
For toying labour hates an Idle guest.

The Grasshopper foodles, helples, and strengthlesse, got
into the next byooke, and in the yeelding sand digde himselfe a
pitte : by which he likewise ingraued this Epitaph.

When Springs greene prime arrayde me with delight,
And euery power with youthfull vigour filde,
Gaue strength to worke what euer fancie wilde,
I neuer feard the force of winters spight.

When

Groatſworth of VVit.

When firſt I ſaw the Sunne the day begin,
And dry the mornings teares from hearbs and graſſe,
I little thought his chearefull light would paſſe,
Till vgly night with darkeneſſe enterd in,
And then day loſt I mournde, ſpring paſt I wailde,
But neither teares for this or that auailde.

Then too too late I praiſ'd the Emmets paine,
That ſought in ſpring a harbour gainſt the hear,
And in the harueſt gathered winters mear,
Perceiuing famine, froſts, and ſtormy raine.

My wretched end may warne Greene ſpringing youth,
To vſe delights, as toys that will deceiue,
And ſcorne the world, before the world them leaue,
For all worlds truſt, is ruine without ruth,
Then bleſt are they that like the toyling Ant,
Prouide in time gainſt woſull winters want.

With this the Graſshopper yeelding to the weathers extre-
mity, died comfoztleſſe without remedy. Like him my ſelfe:
like me, ſhall all that truſt to friends or times inſtancie.
Now ſaint I of my laſt infirmity, beſeeching them that ſhall
bury my body, to publiſh this laſt ſarewell, wꝛitten with my
wꝛetched hand.

Felicem fuiſſe, infaſtum.

F

A



A Letter written to his Wife, found with this Booke after his death.



The remembrance of many wrongs offered thee, and thy vnreproued vertues, adde greater sorrow to my miserable state than I can vtter, or thou conceiue. Neither is it lessened by consideration of thy absence, (though shame would let mee hardly behold thy face) but exceedingly aggravated, for that I cannot (as I ought) to thy owne selfe reconcile my selfe, that thou mightest witnesse my inward woe at this instant, that haue made thee a wofull wife for so long a time. But equal heauen hath denied that comfort, giuing at my last neede, like succour as I haue sought all my life: being in this extremity as boyd of helpe, as thou hast bene of hope. Reason would, that after so long waste, I should not send thee a childe to bring thee greater charge: but consider hee is the fruit of thy wombe, in whose face regard not the Fathers so much, as thy owne perfections. Hee is yet Greene, and may grow fruit, if he be carefully tended: otherwise apt enough (I feare me) to follow his Fathers folly. That I haue offended thee highly I know; that thou canst forget my iniuries, I hardly beleue: yet perswade I my selfe, if thou saw my wretched estate, thou couldest not but lament it: nay, certainly I know thou wouldest. All my wrongs muster themselves about me,

every

Groatſworth of Wit.

every euill at once plagues me. For my contempt of God, I
am contemned of men; for my ſwearing and forſwearing, no
man will beleue me; for my gluttony I ſuffer hunger; for my
drunkenneſſe, thirſt; for my adultery, blcerous ſores. Thus
God hath caſt mee downe that I might be humbled: and pu-
niſhed me, for example of others ſinne: and although he
ſuffers me in this world to periſh without ſuc-
cour, yet truſt I in the world to come to find
mercy, by the merits of my Sau-
our, to whom I commend thee,
and commit my ſoule.

Thy repentant husband

for his diſloyalty;

Robert Greene.

Felicem fuiſſe, infauſtum.

FINIS.

Greenes Epitaph.



GREENES EPITAPH:

Discoursed Dialogue-wise be-
tweene *Life* and *Death*.

LIFE.

Stay grizly Thanatos, pull backe thy spleene;
Triumph'er ouer Tombes, what hast thou done?
To blast the *Muses* *Lawrell*, which was *Greene*;
Minerua's nurse-child, great *Apollo's sonne*:
O what is't made of *Mold*, thy stabbe can shun?
Sure th' hast no eyes, to dart at randome so;
To strike the *Cedar*, let the *Mushroome* grow.

Where life is lou'd, tha'rt too too quicke to kill,
And to epitomize, with pangs, their ioy:
Where Life is loath'd, tha'rt slow, and backward still,
And dost adiourne their death with lifes annoy:
Thus Tyrant-like, the Best, dost still destroy:
To some thou art a sterne vnbidden guest,
But who implore thy helpe, thou helpest least.

DEATH.

Greenes Epitaph.

DEATH.

*Why wouldst creep longer on this dusty Round,
Where wealth's but want ; where Treasures won, but lost ;
Where all good Hopes, in one ill-hap, are drown'd
In some things, all ; in all things, some are crost.
And they but little, that possesse the most.*

*Vnmixed ioyes, to none on earth befall,
Who least, ha's some, who most, ha's neuer all.*

*For that, must I his purer Part vnshroude,
(A Kings command cannot withstand my right)
And giue his prison'd Soule, midst misty Cloud,
A larger Horizon t' emblaze her light:
Her Beauty then appearing Sunne-like bright,
Shall shunne the earth, to shine (fore Angels eyes)
In Blisse, aboue the Star-bespangled skies.*

LIFE.

*You sacred Sisters, from whose Bosome's cropt,
A fresher Flower, than by Alcinous bred:
Through your Eies Lymbecke, let your loues be dropt,
(Though often true that more oft ha's beene said,
The Fairer flower, the sooner withered)
To keep him Greene, with world out-wearing Rimes,
To th' admsiration of succeeding Times.*

Hee,

Greenes Epitaph.

Hee, whose gold-tipp'd Eare-attracting Tongue,
With rare Cyllenian Musicke charmed so,
As marbles danc'd, when Thebes Musitian sung.
Let rowling Teares in Pleni-tides oreflow,
For losse of Englands second Cicero.
To make's not being, be, as he hath beene,
Greene, *newer-wither'd, ever-wither'd* Greene.

I. H.

FINIS.



